

<b>LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS</b>	<b>NUMBER: 18</b>	<b>PAGE: 1 OF 5</b>
<b>TITLE: VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY</b>	<b>PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>RESOLUTION NO: 97-121</b>
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 23, 1997</b>	<b>TYPE: POLICY x PROCEDURE</b>	<b>SUPERSEDES: POLICY # PROCEDURE #</b>

## **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Lucas County Commissioners recognize the need for a work environment free of violence for employees and the visiting public. Specific acts of workplace violence committed by or against an employee, including:

- ! Physical acts of bodily harm
- ! Verbal or written threats of physical violence, through force, threat of force, or intimidation (including the use of the mail, phone, electronic mail or any other media), or Astalking≡
- ! Stealing or deliberately damaging county property

are prohibited and will not be tolerated by the Lucas County Board of Commissioners.

## **II. SCOPE**

- 1) This policy covers all employees directly under the jurisdiction and appointing authority of the Lucas County Board of Commissioners.
- 2) Acts or threats of violence referenced under this policy are those acts committed:
  - a) By one employee against another
  - b) By an employee against a third party
  - c) By a third party against an employee
  - d) Any act or threat committed against the county as an entity

## **III. POSSESSION OF WEAPONS**

It is a violation of this policy for any person (excluding law enforcement personnel on official business) to bring firearms or other weapons defined as Adeadly weapons≡ by Ohio

**Revised Code 2923.11 onto county property (including parking lots) or into county property (including facilities and vehicles), or to carry such weapons while conducting county business. A Deadly weapons means any instrument, device or thing capable of inflicting death, and designed or specifically adapted for use as a weapon, or possessed, carried, or used as a weapon to cause injury or intimidation.**

**LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO  
BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

**NUMBER: 18**

**PAGE: 2 OF 5**

#### **IV. REPORTING INCIDENTS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE AND INITIAL RESPONSE**

**1) Any known threat of a specific action directed toward a specific individual or group of individuals will be taken seriously.**

**2) Any employee having knowledge of an act or threat of violence involving him/herself or another employee must report the incident to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible. (If the person allegedly making the threats or committing the violent act is the employee's direct supervisor, then the report shall be made directly to the Director of the Human Resources Department.)**

**3) In situations of potentially imminent harm or where an act has already occurred, the appropriate law enforcement authorities and emergency responders shall be contacted immediately by the supervisor, if not already contacted by the employee who was threatened. If the agency/department involved has internal security staff, they will also be notified immediately.**

**Once notified, supervisors must report the act or threat of violence to their department head as soon as practicable. The department head shall then notify the county administrator, the director of human resources and the risk manager as soon as possible.**

**4) If the threat is not imminent, then the AThreat Assessment Team shall meet immediately to determine specific actions to be taken in response to the threat. This team shall be comprised of the department head, the director of human resources and the risk manager (or their designees); the security supervisor (if applicable); employee representatives from the sheriff's office and other appropriate agencies (such as the EAP) as needed. Notification to the Threat Assessment Team shall be made by the department head. All reasonable actions will be taken to reduce the possibility of a violent act. Recommendations of the Threat Assessment Team shall be reported to the county**

administrator for his information.

5) If an act has already occurred, the Threat Assessment Team shall still meet as soon as possible to determine specific actions to be taken to prevent further incidents.

6) Nothing in this policy prohibits an employee from independently filing criminal charges and/or a police report, and employees will be encouraged to file such reports.

7) Employees are encouraged to inform their supervisor of any domestic threats, Astalking, or restraining/protective orders. Once notified, the supervisor shall follow the above-listed steps. In addition, the county may seek a protective order of it=s own against the person making the threats.

8) It is a violation of this policy to retaliate in any way against any employee or citizen who files a complaint; it is also a violation for employees to file frivolous complaints.

**LUCAS COUNTY  
BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

**NUMBER: 18**

**PAGE: 3 OF 5**

## **VI. INVESTIGATIONS**

1) In cases where the person allegedly making the threat or committing the act is an employee, the Human Resources Department will conduct an investigation using the guidelines outlined in the county=s existing AHarassment Policy, and existing collective bargaining agreements (where appropriate).

2) Any investigation by the Human Resources Department will be limited to employment-related issues. It will not interfere with any law enforcement investigation into the same allegations.

3) In cases where the alleged perpetrator is not an employee, the county and/or the victim may request that an investigation be conducted by the appropriate law enforcement agency. In general, it will be the county=s practice to meet any act of violence, threat or intimidation against it=s employees by a third party with an immediate response, including legal action where appropriate.

4) The county and its employees shall cooperate fully with law enforcement authorities during any investigation.

## **VII. PERSONAL COUNSELING**

**1) Where appropriate, employees (both victims and those making threats or committing acts) shall be referred immediately to the County=s Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This action alone does not prevent further steps (including discipline) from being taken.**

## **VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY**

**1) Information about an incident or threat will be disclosed on a need-to-know basis only, so that a fair and thorough investigation can be conducted. Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of the employees involved.**

## **IX. BACKGROUND CHECKS**

**1) Prior to an applicant being recommended for any position, the Human Resources Department shall complete both a reference check and (where permitted) a check of criminal records. Ohio law allows inquiries into convictions for specific crimes related to qualifications for a particular job.**

**2) Any applicant making false statements on the employment application and/or any supporting documents shall not be considered for a position. If the discrepancies become known after the applicant has been hired, the applicant will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**

**LUCAS COUNTY  
BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

**NUMBER: 18**

**PAGE: 4 OF 5**

## **X. BUILDING SECURITY AUDITS**

**1) The Risk Management Department shall coordinate audits on a regular basis of each county facility to determine building-related security concerns (such as lighting, accessibility, alarms, etc.). Recommendations for building security improvements shall be made to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration.**

## **XI. EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE FIELD**

**If a job task requires an employee to visit another person outside of the office (the**

client=s home, for example), then the following steps shall be taken prior to the employee completing the work:

**1) The employee involved shall meet with his/her immediate supervisor to review all related case files. Departments shall institute a method to readily identify clients who are known to be violent or harassing (an example would be to use a color-coded system on client files).**

**2) If the client/customer/third party is known to have a history of violent or harassing behavior, then a reasonable combination of steps may be taken to reduce the potential risk. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:**

**a) Another employee (preferably the supervisor) may accompany the employee.**

**b) Appropriate law enforcement agency may be notified so they can be in the area.**

**c) The employee(s) may be provided with a reliable means to communicate in an emergency (such as a hand held radio or portable phone, if one is available).**

**d) The employees(s) may be instructed to notify his/her supervisor immediately upon arrival at and departing from the field location.**

**e) The client may be asked to conduct business in the office instead.**

**3) Buildings and Grounds employees performing tasks in any Alockdown= facility shall always use a Abuddy= system on floors where they may come into contact with inmates or residents. In addition, such work shall only begin after the employees have received verification from the facility=s staff that the immediate area is secure, unless the work is Aemergency= in nature, in which case the facility shall be requested to provide adequate security while the work is in progress.**

## **XII. EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION**

**Employees under the jurisdiction of the Board of Lucas County Commissioners shall wear appropriate employee identification whenever conducting county business.**

**XIII. TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- 1) Each employee, including new hires, shall receive a copy of this policy.**
- 2) The Human Resources and Risk Management Departments shall provide periodic information and training programs. Such information and programs shall include:**
- a) Training for all employees on ways to anticipate, avoid and deal with threats or acts of job-related violence and,**
  - b) Training for supervisors and department heads on recognizing symptoms of potentially violent persons and situations.**

**XV. DISCIPLINE**

- 1) Any employee found in violation of this policy, or any supervisor who knowingly allows a violation of this policy, shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Violations of this policy shall be considered to be a Afailure of good behavior≡ as classified in Chapter 124.34 of the Ohio Revised Code.**
- 2) In addition, the employee(s) involved may be subject to criminal prosecution and the resulting penalties thereof. Because the county will have Azero tolerance≡ for acts or threats of violence, the county will prosecute employees who commit such acts or threats, where appropriate.**

<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
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